CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:

MESSAGE OF 18 MARCH 1969 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE SOVIET UNION TO THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

On behalf of the Soviet Government I greet the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and wish it success in its work.

To reduce the danger of armed conflict and avert the threat of a world thermo-nuclear war, the Soviet Government is making persistent efforts to stop the arms race and to achieve disarmament. Since the emergence of nuclear weapons the Soviet Union has firmly and consistently proclaimed that mankind must be delivered from the nuclear menace.

The drafting and signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was a signal success in the struggle by States to bring about disarmament. The Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament has greatly contributed to the solution of this problem.

We note with satisfaction that over eighty countries have signed this Treaty. Now the task is to ensure that the Treaty enters into force as soon as possible.

The conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty opens prospects for the achievement of international agreements on other matters, including the vitally important matter of nuclear disarmament.

The Soviet Government is well known to attach great significance to the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, under which the Parties undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. It sent to all governments and placed on the agenda of the twenty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly a Memorandum on Some Urgent Measures for Stopping the Arms Race and for Achieving Disarmament.

The peoples are concerned at the continuance of the nuclear arms race. We deem it important to find without delay ways of reaching agreement primarily on the non-use of nuclear weapons, and on other measures of nuclear disarmament. The solution of these problems would undoubtedly contribute much to the efforts to end the arms race, and would help to remove the threat of nuclear war.

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It is also of the greatest importance to agree that the sea-bed and the ocean floor shall not be used for military purposes but shall remain a sphere for man's peaceful activities. For this purpose the Soviet Union is submitting for the consideration of the Eighteen-Nation Committee a draft treaty prohibiting the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof.

Solutions must also be found to the vitally important problems of cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the reduction and destruction of their stockpiles, the limitation and subsequent reduction of means of delivery of strategic weapons, the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological warfare, and other We believe that consideration by the Eighteen-Nation Committee of the relevant proposals contained in the Memorandum of the Soviet Government would facilitate the solution of these major problems.

Permit me to express the hope that the Committee's work will yield practical results in ending the arms race and moving forward towards disarmament.

May the activities of the Eighteen-Nation Committee be guided at all times by the peoples' desire that any international tensions shall be relaxed and world peace ensured.

Respectfully,

A. KOSYGIN

Chairman of the Council
of Ministers of the USSR